

Expansion of Tech Center gains District support

(KAIR)--When Atchison's public school leaders meet Monday, August 13, discussion will include a focus on the proposed expansion of the diesel program at the Highland Community College Technical Center.

According to a news release issued by USD 409, Highland Community College is seeking the expansion due to an increasing enrollment.

The program has grown from 45 students in 2015 to 50 students in 2018, and that increase is cited as one reason for the need for more space.

Currently, the release says, there is a waiting list for those wanting to enroll.

Citing the economic benefits of the technical center, including an annual expenditure of \$350,000 in Atchison and Atchison County, and what the release calls “the pivotal role in the educational development of students,” USD 409 is voicing support for the expansion.

Proposed by Highland Community College is the construction of a new facility, located off of Atchison's Country Club Road, on land owned by the school district.

The release says “creating a new facility would allow the technical school to have more open space on campus and would bring more of the programs that are now off campus back onto campus.”

Currently, Diesel I and Diesel II are in two different locations, and the planned expansion would bring the two programs together in one building, expand the program from two instructors to three, and open up the program to new students.

The Board of Education is, according to the release, currently in discussions surrounding different options to help achieve the goal. Possibilities include deeding the amount of land needed for the expansion too the college, USD 409 having first right of refusal if HCC chooses to sell the expansion building/land in the future, and, place a sunset clause in the agreement, or deed, that if ground is not broken by an undetermined certain date, the land would revert back to the local district.

The school board is seeking community input about the proposal during the August 13 meeting.

The release says more discussion is likely during the September Board of Education meeting, with possible action to be taken at that time.

Many Signals Communications